

☆☆ 1 LEADERSHIP

1.1 Senior Executive Leadership

“SSCOM will thrive and be successful if it is innovative, has a sound strategic plan, is customer focused, and is linked with industry to incorporate change and new business systems/technology to improve support to our soldiers. Our opportunities are limited only by our imagination and our ability as an organization to collectively work toward a common vision, goals and objectives. Together there is nothing we cannot achieve.”

With those words, Brigadier General Henry T. Glisson, first commander of the U. S. Army’s Soldier Systems Command (SSCOM), set the direction, the tone, and the challenge for our newly formed command to achieve our vision to be the *“Champion*

for the soldier as a system -- the recognized leader in assuring the decisive materiel edge for the 21st Century Warrior.”

1.1a Leadership and Direction

Since the formation of our command, the process for strategic planning and how we organize to achieve optimum customer focus and continuous process improvement has been evolving. While striving to capitalize on the past successes of our subordinate organizations, e.g., the Natick Research, Development and Engineering Center (NRDEC) was an Army finalist in the 1996 PQA application process, our senior leadership organized into two executive teams. The Command Group Team (CGT), comprised of the Commander, Deputy Commander, Chief of Staff, Command Sergeant Major, and the Union President, sets the over-

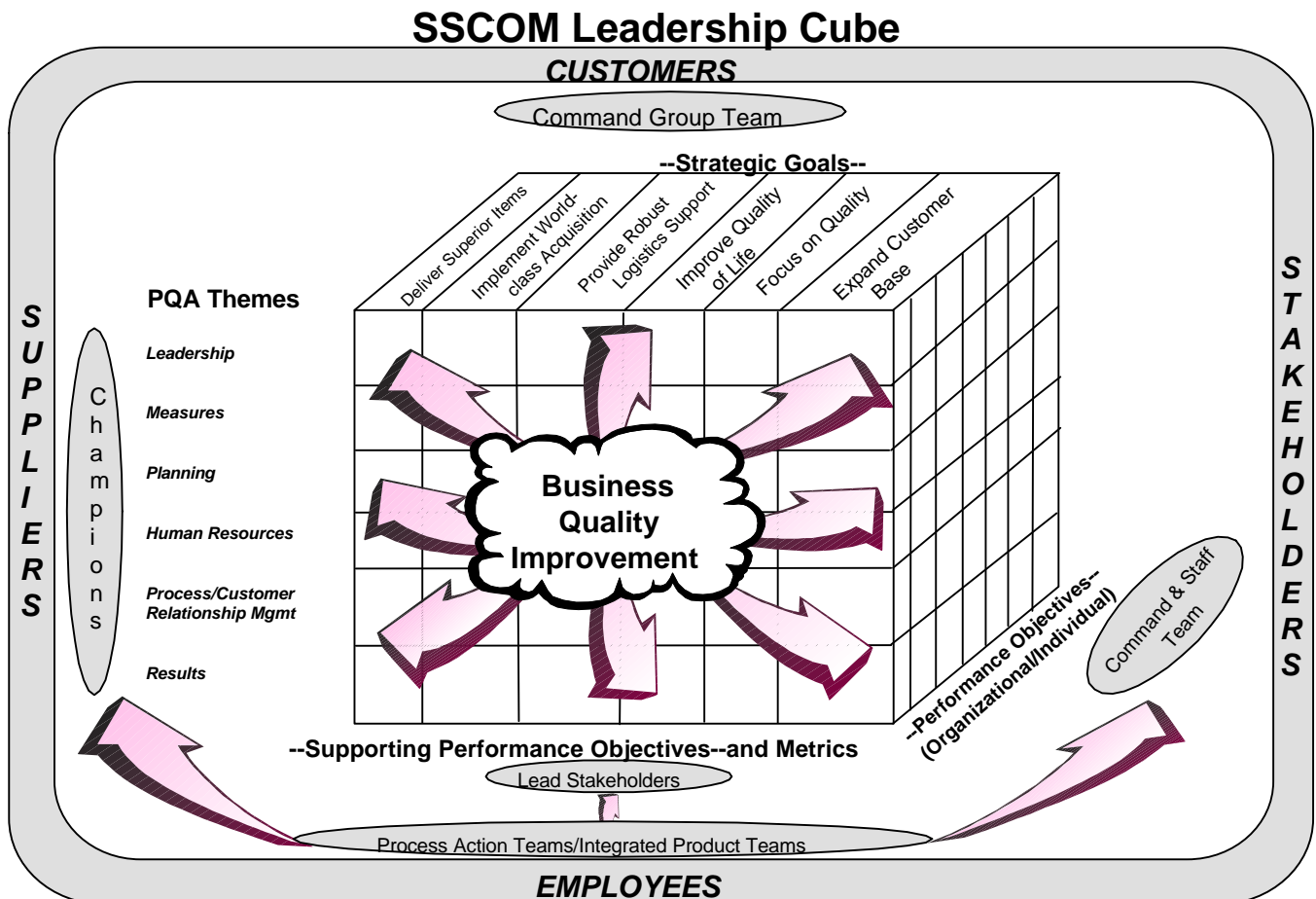


Figure 1.1. SSCOM Leadership Cube

all direction for the command. The Command and Staff Team (CAST) which includes both the CGT and senior line and staff executives of the command, assists in setting command direction as well as program execution, evaluation and continuous improvement (Figure 1.2).

As part of our strategic planning process (Figure 3.1), the CAST worked diligently to develop our new command's Vision, Mission, Values and Strategic Initiatives by consulting key customers and stakeholders for their input. SSCOM utilizes the Integrated Product Team (IPT) approach as one of the cornerstones for integrating customers and stakeholders into the planning process (section 5.1). This critical business approach was expanded to the executive level through the establishment of the Individual Soldier System Executive Integration Process Team (ISSEIPT). This IPT is chaired by the SSCOM Commander, and the Deputy to the Commander serves as Executive Director. The ISSEIPT allows SSCOM's senior leadership to maintain a continuous dialogue with customers and key stakeholders. A working level team, the Individual Soldier System Integration Process Team (ISSIPT), is chaired by our Program Manager-Soldier with membership from customers and all program managers involved in developing and integrating soldier systems. Program progress and issues are reported through the SSCOM Deputy, as Executive Director, to the Executive IPT at least semi-annually.

SSCOM's Vision, Values and Strategic Goals were developed with extensive employee involvement. This was done not only through the Union President's membership on the CAST, but by continuous communication throughout the organization. Several draft documents were distributed to the work force for review, and their comments incorporated into the final product.

The Leadership System and Continuous Improvement. Customer focus and continuous process improvement are achieved within the context of the SSCOM Continuous Improvement System (Figure 1.4). The driver for this process and for SSCOM's continuous improvement efforts is the "SSCOM Leadership Cube"(Figure 1.1).

The Leadership Cube displays the influence of SSCOM customers on the development of our Strategic Goals and supporting performance objec-

tives and metrics. The Command Group Team (CGT) has ownership of the six command goals and is responsible for providing direction and leadership to lead internal stakeholders in establishing command level supporting performance objectives. The Lead Stakeholders also identify process owners within the command to develop subordinate organizational performance objectives. Lastly, employee performance objectives are developed to identify a clear connection to organizational performance objectives and their part in satisfying the needs of SSCOM customers (section 4.1a).

The SSCOM Command and Staff Team is committed to conducting Business Quality Improvement in the context of the President's Quality Award (PQA) criteria. The CAST separated the criteria into "Themes" and assigned a "Champion" for each. These Champions are responsible for utilizing the criteria to identify improvement efforts that cut across the Strategic Goals and supporting performance objectives.

The leadership teams on the three axes of the Cube, working in continuous dialogue with customers, employees, suppliers and stakeholders, form the structure for the SSCOM leadership system and the means by which true business quality improvement is being achieved.

Reviewing Organizational Performance. An excellent example of how the Leadership Cube integrates SSCOM goals with the PQA criteria is the increased focus and frequency with which SSCOM leadership now addresses quality issues. Our "Leadership Champion" worked with the Resource Management Directorate to develop a process for making quality "an operational issue" and a weekly focus of the CAST. Figure 1.2 depicts this "SSCOM Quality Breakout" which is discussed further in sections 1.2b and 3.1.

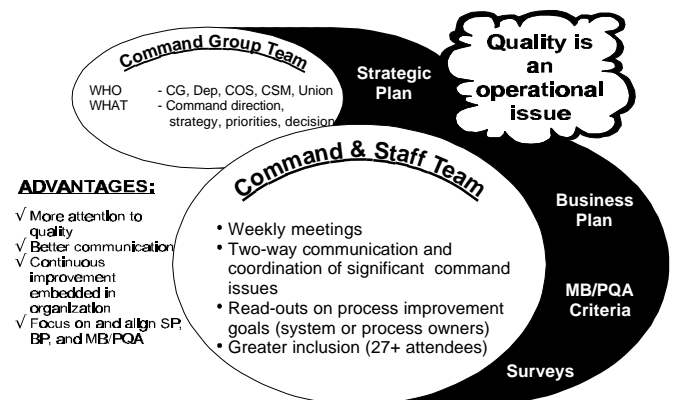


Figure 1.2. The SSCOM Quality Breakout

NRDEC's Executive Steering Committee (ESC) also meets weekly and has established three priority objectives linked to SSCOM objectives each assigned to executive action officers. Their efforts are focused on improving the tactical planning process (Figure 3.1), establishing a multi-tiered performance review system and facilitating communication to the work force within the next year. ESC minutes are published on SSCOM's e-mail system. Performance review is covered in more detail in section 1.2b.

Establishing and Communicating Clear Values and High Expectations. Our leadership knows that to achieve our Vision of becoming the champion for the soldier as a system we must be customer-focused, empowered, innovative and operate in an open, productive, and supportive environment. We also recognize that satisfaction in the work place produces superior customer service.

To provide a focus on employee morale, annual surveys have been conducted, survey data analyzed and results briefed to the workforce by our leadership. Results of the survey are shown in Figure 6.38. Team Morale, a process action team composed of representatives from various SSCOM organizations, the Union, and the Deputy for Installation and Support Services, was formed to develop action plans for the six areas identified as most needing improvement. The exceptional efforts of Team Morale are discussed further in sections 4.2a and 4.4c.

In addition to Team Morale, a second process action team called BOSS (Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers) meets regularly to address quality of life issues unique to the soldiers assigned to SSCOM.

Creating Opportunities for Excellence. We also recognize that quality service to customers depends on quality suppliers. Not only have we entered into key partnerships with quality organizations like Motorola and Hughes, but we understand the importance of recognizing other partners who play critical roles in accomplishing SSCOM goals. To this end, we held the first annual SSCOM Commander's Recognition Award Program (Figure 1.3) to recognize SSCOM's outstanding suppliers; to celebrate SSCOM's partnership with industry; and to encourage suppliers to help SSCOM achieve its business goals.

Other Communication Strategies. Senior executives recognize that communication with customers,



Figure 1.3. Commander's Recognition Award for Outstanding Suppliers

suppliers, employees and stakeholders is one of the most critical factors in our goal of becoming a quality organization. Communication throughout our workforce is detailed in section 1.2a. In addition to the establishment of the Individual Soldier System Executive Integration Process Team and the numerous supporting Integrated Product Teams (IPTs), the following paragraphs outline an aggressive strategy for communicating our Vision, Values and customer focus and for integrating stakeholders in our continuous improvement initiatives. Specifically, we:

- Created an extensive network of on-site representatives at key customer locations (section 7.1b).
- Conducted our first annual "Customer Focus Workshop" (section 7.1b).
- Aggressively pursue quality partnerships to achieve common understanding and goals. Examples include active participation in the Center for Advanced Food Technology Consortia with Rutgers University, joint formation of the national Parachute Technology Council with the Department of Energy, membership on the NASA Technical Advisory Panel on controlled Ecological Life Support Systems, and participation in the Apparel Research Network.
- Published the "SSCOM Annual Report 1995" to communicate our Vision, Mission, Values, Goals and accomplishments to all stakeholders.
- Provide information packets to customers including copies of the SSCOM Strategic Plan, the SSCOM Annual Report 1995, and the Quality of Life pamphlet, which depicts SSCOM values and accomplishments.
- Participate in the annual MetroWest Chamber of Commerce "Business-to-Business Show."

1.1b The Leadership System - Evaluation and Improvement

Senior executives utilize a variety of methods to communicate and reinforce SSCOM's Vision, quality values and customer focus with managers and to link individual performance expectations to SSCOM's performance goals and objectives.

Our executives employ the Total Army Performance Evaluation System (TAPES) as a mechanism for open communication (section 4.2b). This process is cascaded throughout the command to ensure that quality improvement goals are a matter of constant organizational and individual focus.

Employee Survey. A key ingredient in the SSCOM leadership system is the annual employee survey. This provides valuable feedback throughout SSCOM to evaluate the effectiveness of our leadership system. Through this process, communication was identified as an area needing improvement. Under the direction of Team Morale, eight employee and manager Focus Groups were organized to help define the problem and recommend solutions. Section 1.2a identifies some of the communication strategies which have resulted from this process. In addition, using the SSCOM Leadership Cube structure, the Leadership Champion provides a continuous focus on communication and ensures that all areas needing improvement are addressed.

Leader Development. In addition to formal counseling, which takes place as part of the TAPES process, an essential part of the SSCOM leadership system is our Training for Executive Excellence (TRAXX) Program (see section 4.2a).

TRAXX provides a leadership assessment instrument for supervisors and team leaders that incorporates input from the individual, the supervisor, peers, and subordinates (360 degree evaluation). This results in development of an improvement plan which is incorporated into the TAPES process as training requirements to be addressed in the next rating cycle. TRAXX will be fully deployed by June 1997.

To reinforce leadership as one of SSCOM's core Values, we established the SSCOM "Positive Leadership Award" (section 4.2b). This award gives employees an opportunity to recognize outstanding supervisors, will help reinforce the TRAXX system, and will demonstrate the importance of effective leadership in achieving the SSCOM Vision.

Senior executives also evaluate and work towards improvement of their leadership skills, as evidenced by the following:

- Consultants evaluate our leaders and their techniques and recommend areas for improvement using focus groups as an effective training aid.
- Higher education, such as the Center for Critical Leadership, provides invaluable feedback for sharpening leadership skills.

1.2 Leadership System and Organization

1.2a Integration and Communication of Values, Expectations and Directions

All major planning documents reflect SSCOM's Vision, quality values and customer focus. Plans are converted into specific requirements for supervisors. Their performance evaluation reports gauge success in the areas of customer focus, technical performance and leadership competence.

Commitment to Customer Focus and High Performance. As described in section 1.1a, the formation of SSCOM has brought with it a stronger focus and coordination of effort toward pleasing our customers, while integrating the PQA criteria in our quality improvement initiatives. This new start has allowed us to take a fresh look at how we direct our business effort toward achieving that end. Our approach is summarized in the SSCOM Continuous Improvement System, Figure 1.4.

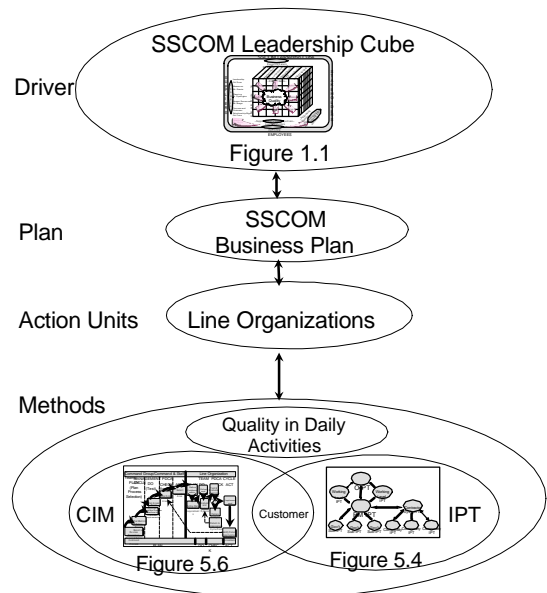


Figure 1.4. SSCOM Continuous Improvement System

This model shows that our leadership drives continuous improvement through the process described by the Leadership Cube (Figure 1.1). The Cube defines the relationship between SSCOM goals and the PQA criteria, and the efforts of our Command Group Team, PQA Champions, and organizational leaders. The Continuous Improvement System further shows that we instill “Quality in Daily Activities” through two subordinate processes. The Continuous Improvement Methodology (CIM) is the system utilized by the CAST to prioritize improvement initiatives and develop action plans (Figure 5.6 and section 5.3). Integrated Product Teams (IPT) provide early insight into product performance, manufacturing process capability, quality, development time and associated risks (Figure 5.4 and section 5.1).

As an integral part of our customer focus and supporting the “Continuous Improvement System,” SSCOM’s leaders have implemented a systematic method to organize and manage program information. This program management database generates “quad charts” (Figure 1.5) that track individual program quality objectives, planned accomplishments, funding and program execution data, and identifies customers and the SSCOM project officer. The database also captures program area vision statements that align soldier products with the corporate vision. These quad charts are not only made available to customers and stakeholders but also provide the basis for quarterly program reviews with customers.

MODELING & SIMULATION TECHNOLOGIES

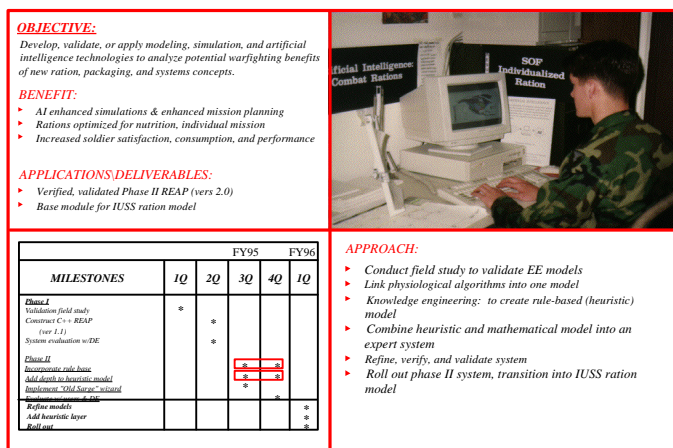


Figure 1.5. Program tracking

Communication Throughout the Workforce.

Communication is a continuous theme throughout the planning and execution of SSCOM programs. Section 1.1a details employee involvement in the establishment of SSCOM’s Vision, Values and Goals, as well as our continuous effort to respond to the needs of our workforce through annual surveys and resulting improvement efforts. In addition, the following efforts to improve communication to the work force have been implemented:

- Distributed the SSCOM Strategic Plan to every SSCOM employee. Employees also carry this information with them on a small laminated card with their identification badges.
- The Commander and subordinate leaders meet regularly with the SSCOM workforce to brief the SSCOM Vision, Values and Goals and progress toward quality improvement.
- The Commander has implemented the “chain teaching” technique, requiring all leaders to brief their employees.
- “Commander’s Corner” appears weekly in the Command Bulletin. Some of topics covered were:
 - SSCOM Mission, Vision, Values
 - President’s Quality Award Program
 - Improving our Quality of Life
- Developed an anonymous e-mail line direct to the Commander called “Straight Talk”.
- Distribute weekly CAST quality improvement initiatives to the work force by e-mail.

1.2b SSCOM Performance Review

SSCOM’s Quality Breakout (Figure 1.2) shows that “Quality is an Operational Issue.” As such SSCOM utilizes SSCOM Goals, PQA criteria and organizational and individual performance objectives as shown in the Leadership Cube to review performance.

During our weekly Command and Staff Team (CAST) meetings, both line and staff leaders as well as PQA Champions brief activity and progress toward the achievement of a Command performance objective or quality initiative. The PQA Champions ensure that actions necessary to improve against the PQA criteria are identified. This may result in the formation of a Process Action Team (PAT). If so, PAT actions/recommendations are briefed.

Weekly discussion of quality initiatives also leads to reallocation of resources by the Command Group Team. An example is the recent funding of an expansion to the SSCOM computer network that will ensure all employees are provided access to communication and system enhancements.

Each quarter, a “Review and Analysis” is conducted with all SSCOM leadership in attendance. Directors summarize their accomplishments against SSCOM Goals (briefed at weekly staff meetings) from the previous quarter. They also identify initiatives for the following quarter, which then become the basis for tracking performance during weekly staff meetings.

A regular part of quarterly performance reviews is a “sanity check” against the Business Plan. This generates input for an annual offsite meeting of the Command and Staff Team to review the strategic direction of the Command, to validate our goals and performance objectives, and to update the Business Plan.

Other Performance Reviews. Customer feedback is a critical ingredient to the process outlined above, but it also provides the basis for a variety of other performance review forums. Soldier feedback from operational environments provides the best insight as to how well our products are working and how they can be improved. Chapter 7 fully describes how this feedback is collected.

Utilizing quad charts like that shown in Figure 1.5, we formally conduct quarterly and semiannual program reviews with our customers and service suppliers (section 5.2a). In addition, Figure 7.1 details many of the other forums we utilize to review our performance, obtain customer feedback and make program decisions and modifications. Some examples follow:

- Soldier Enhancement Program reviews result in delivering items to the soldier faster. Since 1990 SSCOM has delivered over 59 quality products to soldiers in significantly reduced cycle time (Figure 6.29).
- Data from the annual DoD Science and Technology Review are input to the Integrated Planning Process (section 5.1) for planning strategies and also to the NRDEC ESC for input to SSCOM’s science and technology program.
- A National Academy of Sciences panel of experts in our technology areas conducts technology reviews and provides data for use by our senior

executives in identifying and resourcing improvements to our business areas.

Appropriate metrics are a critical factor in the value of these periodic reviews and their effectiveness in measuring SSCOM progress. SSCOM has embarked upon a joint research project with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Sloan School of Management and the University of Chicago to examine the impact of the Government Performance and Results Act metrics on R&D effectiveness and to define ultimately more meaningful metrics for the SSCOM R&D community.

1.3 Public Responsibility and Corporate Citizenship

SSCOM’s commitment to the public is reflected in our goal to “Provide for a quality infrastructure, and quality of life and work environment for all,” and the focus on our values of “ethics and integrity.”

We ensure that the products we develop for our soldiers and the technology used in that development are environmentally friendly, without compromising the warfighter or the soldier as a system. We accomplish this goal through environmental and safety assessments, which are performed for all programs, including the evaluation of materials, processes, through final disposal.

Through annual ethics training, our employees recognize their own responsibility and are committed to honoring the government’s Code of Ethics. We acknowledge our responsibility to our key stakeholders, the public and community, and conduct our business with the highest legal and ethical standards, integrating these policies into our Strategic Plan, ensuring that both the environment and public safety are protected, as explained below.

1.3a Integrating Public Responsibilities into our Performance Improvement Efforts

In 1994, the Natick installation was designated a Superfund site by the Environmental Protection Agency when ground water contaminants were discovered. In coordination with the local community, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Mas-

sachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (Mass DEP), a plan was developed to address our environmental issues. The process began with extensive investigation of the contamination and its source and any potential health or ecological risks. Assessing the risk aids in the overall management of the program to ensure achievement in the planning process, and ultimately in measuring our success. A crucial connection in these efforts is the Restoration Advisory Board (RAB).

The RAB is made up of community volunteers, town officials, and personnel from the Army, the EPA and the Mass DEP. This group works as a team to address clean-up strategies. All meetings are open to the public and community members are invited to attend.

We manage risk and ensure compliance, to go beyond mandated performance levels in public safety and environmental areas, by planning and setting operational goals and targets. Programs and policies have been implemented to achieve these goals as follows:

- The Hazardous Materials Spill Response Team (SSCOM volunteers) performs annual joint training with the Natick Fire Department and Rescue Teams and local area hospital.
- The development and implementation of unique laboratory safety and hazardous waste management training for all employees (lauded by EPA and Army Materiel Command).
- The Laboratory Revitalization Project is a multimillion dollar lab overhaul, which will abate a potential environmental hazard (possible discharge of standing mercury in the plumbing infrastructure into the sanitary sewer system). (Figure 6.21)
- The annual Environmental Open House for the community. Our success is measured by actual attendance. From the first open house to the last, the attendance has decreased. (A decrease in this instance is better). The cause for the decrease (as determined through public surveys and response cards) is the resultant factors of our direct community involvement, the open invitation to tour the labs, the quarterly *Environmental Report* newsletter, and the RAB. By improving our communication channels, we have gained the trust of the community.

1.3b Taking the Lead as a Corporate Citizen in the Local Community

We are committed to continuing our close partnership with the nine local area communities in the “MetroWest” Chamber of Commerce. We are also a member of the Economic Development Task Force comprised of the major employers in the area.

SSCOM is an area leader in dedicating both time and resources to the community. Our executive team has forged the path, and the workforce follows selflessly, giving of their time and money to help our area communities grow and prosper.

- We have established Cooperative Research and Development Agreements with industry. SSCOM has 18 leveraged partnerships, which promote commercialization and save millions of dollars annually.
- SSCOM was selected as a national test evaluation program site for New England’s first electricity generating, nonpolluting fuel cell. Use of the fuel cell technology will improve air quality and reduce energy costs by approximately \$70,000 per year.
- We provide manpower and vehicles to pick-up and deliver food to area food pantries on a routine basis.
- We donated computers, desks, book shelves, laboratory glassware and laboratory equipment to 28 public schools (section 6.2).
- We are on the leading edge in recycling efforts in paper, corrugated cardboard and scrap metal (Figure 6.31).
- We sponsored five Red Cross blood drives in 1995. Our employees donated more than 500 pints of blood, 100 more pints than in 1994.
- Employees donated \$63,904 to the Combined Federal Campaign - an increase of 17% from the previous year.